



# FEMA

## *Berkeley Hazard Mitigation Program Bond Program Addresses Multiple Hazards*

**Berkeley, CA** - Like most California communities, the City of Berkeley is susceptible to multiple hazards, such as earthquakes, wildland-urban interface fires, landslides, and urban creek flooding. The community has seen significant earthquake damage in recent years and is in continual preparation for the forecasted Hayward fault event and other major regional earthquakes. The Hayward fault runs through the eastern portion of Berkeley.

The City of Berkeley launched its first mitigation bond program in 1992 with passage of two general obligation bond measures and establishment of a variety of municipal residential upgrade incentive programs. The main purpose of the City's program is to reduce potential life and property losses in the event of a major natural disaster.

An Un-reinforced Masonry Upgrade Program was developed to provide legislative mandates for the upgrade of hazardous buildings and a seismic technical Advisory Group established to advise the city manager on all seismic safety projects. A thorough study is planned to define the community's risk exposure including loss estimates using FEMA's HAZUS software. The study will be used to adopt improved building codes and standards for upgrades and to secure funding sources for private sector risk reduction.

The City also constructed a new Emergency Operation Center (EOC), a separate public safety building to house police and fire operations, and installed a contingency disaster water supply system. A special fire assessment district was instituted in the Berkeley hills areas most vulnerable to wildland-urban interface fires. These districts levied an annual fee of \$50 per parcel to fund vegetation management activities and provide fire prevention assistance for property owners.

In Dec. 1998, the Disaster Resistant Community Project was launched. This project will combine the efforts of the University of California, Berkeley, and City officials along with many community stakeholders to continue hazard assessment and mitigation efforts. The public sector work has been very successful. By the year 2002, every major municipal and school building in Berkeley will be seismically upgraded.

The City will concentrate on private sector mitigation for the next 5-10 years to reduce hazards in seismically weak commercial and residential structures. About 1,200 homes are upgraded annually (approx. 6,300 homes in the last five years) via the transfer tax rebate program. Another 1,250 residences have been upgraded in the last 18 months using the permit fee waiver program.

The tremendous local investment in risk reduction has generated \$262 million in three local mitigation bond measures. City officials say that the post disaster costs saved would be at least \$520 million with this pre-disaster mitigation investment.

By leveraging funds and seeking technical assistance from a variety of sources, this city has made significant progress in reducing hazards and making its residents more aware of the necessity to mitigate and prepare. These efforts will protect the infrastructure, economic stability and sustainability of the community and in doing so the residents will benefit from their investments in mitigation.



Alameda County,  
California



### Quick Facts

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$262,000,000.00 (Estimated)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Retrofitting, Structural**

Primary Funding:

**Homeowner**